

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above-identified patent application in view of the present amendment and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Corrected drawing Fig. 3 is attached to this amendment. Fig. 3 has been corrected in accordance with the proposed drawing correction of January 2, 2003.

This amendment amends the specification to provide antecedent basis for the subject matter of claims 38, 39, and 42. No new matter has been added to the application by this amendment. All of the amendments to the specification are supported by the original disclosure, particularly Fig. 2 of the original disclosure. This amendment also amends claims 39 and 42 to overcome the 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph rejection.

It is respectfully acknowledged that claims 3-9, 15, 17-30, and 37 are allowed. Claims 38-43 stand rejected as anticipated under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) by Sawato (JP 10-167003). The rejection of claims 38-43 is respectfully traversed.

Claim 38 recites that at least a portion of the spool is a one-piece structure that is not formed from separate structures secured together. The portion of the spool that is the one-piece structure forms at least part of an axle and two support walls of the spool. The seat belt webbing is wound about the axle of the spool in a location between the two support walls. Gear teeth of the gear assembly are formed integrally on the one-piece structure of the spool.

In rejecting claim 38, the Office Action states that Sawato teaches that gear 203 is formed integrally on the outside surface of a support wall of spool 20. The Office Action concludes that the spool 20 in Sawato must be a one-piece structure and not separate parts secured together since the exploded views of Figs. 1 and 3 do not show the parts of the spool 20 as exploded, or separated from one another. This is an incorrect interpretation of Sawato.

Attached to this amendment is a computer translation of the Detailed Description of Sawato. This computer translation was obtained from the Industrial Property Digital Library provided on the Japanese Patent Office web site (www.jpo.go.jp/). Paragraph 0036 of the Detailed Description of Sawato teaches that the passive-movement gear 203 is fixed to the reel 20 (improperly labeled 203 in paragraph 0036). Thus, Sawato teaches that gear 203 and spool 20 are separate parts secured (fixed) together. Therefore, Sawato fails to teach the features of claim 38 and allowance of claim 38 is respectfully requested.

Moreover, the Detailed Description of Sawato also teaches that ratchet foil 38 is fixed to the side of the reel 20 opposite gear 203. (Detailed Description, paragraph 0046). Thus, Figs. 1 and 3 of Sawato clearly do not show every portion of the retractor as exploded since the assembly comprising the spool 20, ratchet foil 38, and gear 203, which are described as separate parts fixed together, is not shown as exploded in the figures. Therefore, the Office Action's

reliance on Figs. 1 and 3 for a showing that gear 203 and spool 20 form parts of a one-piece structure is improper.

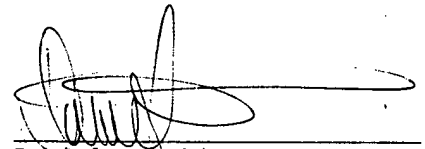
Additionally, in response to the Office Action of August 16, 2004, we requested that the Sawato reference be studied by our Japanese associates as to the assertion that the gear 203 is formed integrally on the outside surface of a support wall of spool 20. Our Japanese associates responded by informing us that Sawato fails to teach that the gear 203 and the spool 20 are formed integrally as a one-piece structure. A copy of the letter received from our Japanese associates is also attached to this amendment.

Since Sawato fails to disclose each feature of claim 38, the rejection of claim 38 as anticipated by Sawato is improper and should be withdrawn. Allowance of claim 38 is respectfully requested.

Claims 39-43 depend from claim 38 and are allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 38.

Please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment in the fees for this amendment to our Deposit Account No. 20-0090.

Respectfully submitted,



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